

VZCZCXRO1416
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1580/01 1681543
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 171543Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3504
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001580

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2019
TAGS: [KTIP](#) [KWMN](#) [KLPM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ELAB](#) [SMIG](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY BAGHDAD DELIVERS 2009 TIP REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 60957

Summary

¶1. (SBU) On June 16, we delivered the 2009 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report to Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Selim. We informed the minister that the Department had ranked Iraq as a Tier 2 Watch List country rather than categorize it as a special case, as had been done in previous years. We explained the definition of Tier 2 Watch List, the possible sanctions and waivers involved if a country moves into Tier 3 status, and steps that the GOI must take to improve its ranking. Minister Selim thanked the Embassy for the report, stating that the GOI was aware of the issue and expressed strong interest in improving Iraq's ranking. She then advised us on the current status of GOI efforts to combat TIP, including drafting anti-TIP legislation. End summary.

TIP Report Delivered

¶2. (U) On June 16, per reftel instructions, Poloff delivered the Iraq narrative of the 2009 TIP report to the Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Selim. Poloff discussed the contents of the report and explained that the Department had chosen to rank Iraq in the report for the first time since 2003 in recognition of the normalizing situation in Iraq. Poloff then explained the reasoning behind Iraq being ranked as a Tier 2 Watchlist country and the statutory requirements for sanctions (as well as the possibility of waivers) if Iraq should fall into Tier 3 status. Finally, Poloff outlined possible steps that the GOI could take to improve its ranking by demonstrating its commitment to combating TIP including the passage of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation, prosecution of individuals involved in trafficking, and the opening of government shelters to assist the victims of trafficking.

GOI TIP efforts

¶3. (SBU) Minister Selim thanked Poloff for the report and stated that she and other members of the GOI were very aware of the trafficking problem. Selim mentioned that the MFA had recently received a letter stating that 12 Iraqi girls under the age of 18 were currently in prison in Syria for prostitution and that they had been trafficked there from the Gulf. Selim said that some of the girls had been kidnapped and others had been sold into prostitution. She stated that four of the 12 girls had finished their prison sentences in Syria and now were going to be resettled in Sweden with the assistance of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The Minister also described to Poloff that the government formed an informal Committee on Trafficking six months ago that is headed by the Ministry of Human Rights and includes representatives from the ministries of Defense,

Interior, Health, Labor, Justice, and Foreign Affairs. Poloff stated that the formation of the interagency committee was a welcome development and expressed hope that it would lead to concrete steps being taken to prevent and prosecute trafficking.

¶4. (SBU) The discussion then turned to the current status of the GOI's anti-trafficking legislation. According to Selim, the legislation has made its way from the Cabinet to the Shura Council, but that when the Shura Council would complete its review of the legislation was unclear. By way of comparison, Selim noted that the Human Rights Law that would govern her ministry has been in the Shura Council for the past year and a half and that government ministries were constantly battling to have their legislation moved to the top of the queue. In discussing the particulars of the TIP legislation, Selim noted that, as drafted, the bill would institutionalize the current ad hoc interagency GOI Trafficking Committee, but would place the Ministry of Interior in the lead role rather than the Ministry of Human Rights.

¶5. (C) Selim also mentioned that there was much debate over the inclusion of a provision to open a shelter for victims of trafficking, but she understood that this provision had been taken out of the current draft. She noted that if indeed trafficking shelters were put back into the legislation that they should be put under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Human Rights or the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs. Minister noted, however, that the Women's Ministry did not have a budget or the capacity and that the Ministry of Human Rights would also need a budget increase in order to operate

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any shelters effectively. She stated firmly that if the Ministry of Interior were to run the shelters that they would simply become detention facilities. Poloff concurred that it would be better if the Ministry of Human Rights or Women's Affairs had the lead on operating trafficking shelters and encouraged the Minister to continue to push for its inclusion in the final legislation.

Comment

¶6. (SBU) Minister Selim clearly realizes that Iraq has a growing trafficking problem and that action is required to deal with it. We will work with her to increase the TIP awareness of other key GOI officials. While bottlenecks in the legislative drafting process will inevitably hamper the passage of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation, we believe that the ranking of Iraq as a Tier 2 Watchlist country, coupled with a growing awareness that Iraqi women are indeed being trafficked abroad could serve as an impetus to speed up the process. We are seeking an appointment with the MFA to inform them of the TIP report's release and the Public Affairs section will post the report to the Embassy's website. End comment.
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